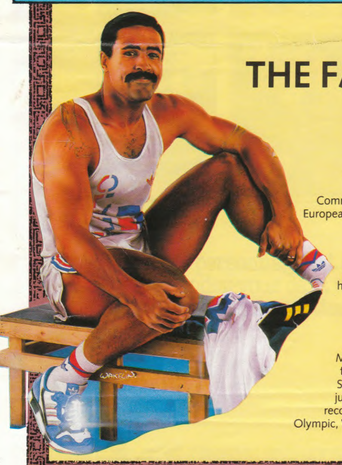
DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE



DALEY THOMPSON

THE FACTS & FIGURES

Born Notting Hill, West London, 30 July 1958.
Height: 1.88m. Weight: 88kg.
Married, with one daughter.
Competes for Newham and Essex Beagles AC.

Major competitive record in decathlons:
Olympic Games: 1976 – 18th; 1980 – 1st; 1984 – 1st.
World Championships: 1983 – 1st; 1987 – 9th.
Commonwealth Games: 1978 – 1st; 1982 – 1st; 1986 – 1st.
European Championships: 1978 – 2nd; 1982 – 1st; 1986 – 1st.
European Junior Championships: 1977 – 1st.

Unbeaten in decathlon competitions from September 1978 to August 1987, when injury wrecked his performance at the World Championships in Rome. He has won 19 of the 29 decathlons he had contested up to the Seoul Olympics, although curiously has never competed in a decathlon in England (although he has done in Wales and Scotland).

Became only the second man after American Bob Mathias (1948/52) ever to retain the Olympic decathlon title. Aiming for an unprecedented third Olympic title in Seoul. Has set four world decathlon records, three world junior decathlon records and 10 UK and Commonwealth records. In the Autumn of 1986 he simultaneously held the Olympic, World, European and Commonwealth titles – unique in any athletics event.

PERSONAL BESTS

These are Daley Thompson's personal best performances in each of the events which comprise the decathlon, together with the scores he would total if he achieved them within one decathlon competition! As you will see, the potential total is well in excess of his current world record.

Event	Performance	Year	Score
100m	10.26	1986	1032
Long jump	8.11m (wind assisted)	1978	1089
Shot putt	16.10m	1984	857
High jump	2.14m (indoors)	1982	934
400m	46.86	1982	965
	(First day total		4877)
110m hurdles	14.04	1986	969
Discus	49.10m	1986	852
Pole vault	5.25m	1986	988
Javelin	63.78m*	1986	795
1500m	4:20.3	1976	810
	(Second day total		4414)
	Potential total =		9,291 points

*Using the old-style javelin, which was discontinued in 1986, Daley had thrown 65.38m (819 points), increasing his previous potential score to 9,315 points.

WORLD RECORD

This is the breakdown of Daley's most recent world record, set on August 8/9th 1984, during the Los Angeles Olympic Games. On the pre-1985 scoring tables, it exactly equalled the existing world record score of 8,798 set earlier in 1984 by his great West German rival Jurgen Hingsen.
But, re-calculated on the new 1985 tables, Thompson's score proved to be .15 points superior to Hingsen's record, and is now accepted as the sole world best.

First day		
100m	10.44	989 points
Long jump	8.01m	1063 points
Shot putt	15.72m	834 points
High jump	2.03m	831 points
400m	46.97	960 points
	(First day total: **4677** points)	
Second day		
110m hurdles	14.33	932 points
Discus	46.56m	799 points
Pole vault	5.00m	910 points
Javelin	65.24m	817 points
1500m	4:35.00	712 points
	(Second day total: **4170** points)	
TOTAL		**8847** points

THE DECATHLON

HISTORY

The concept of deciding the best all-round athlete dates back to the Greeks and the Ancient Olympic Games, where a five-event pentathlon was staged in 708BC. But although the decathlon owes its name to the Greek language (*deka*, meaning ten, and *athlos*, meaning contest or struggle), in its present form it was really developed by the Scandinavians in time for the Vth Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912.

The content of events has remained virtually unchanged since then, but the universal scoring tables have had to be revised on a number of occasions, partly to correct any imbalance between events which became apparent, but also to reflect technilogical developments in the sport. Pole vault standards, for example, rose dramatically from the 1960s with the replacement of the traditional metal vaulting poles by fibre glass poles which could almost catapult athletes to much greater heights.

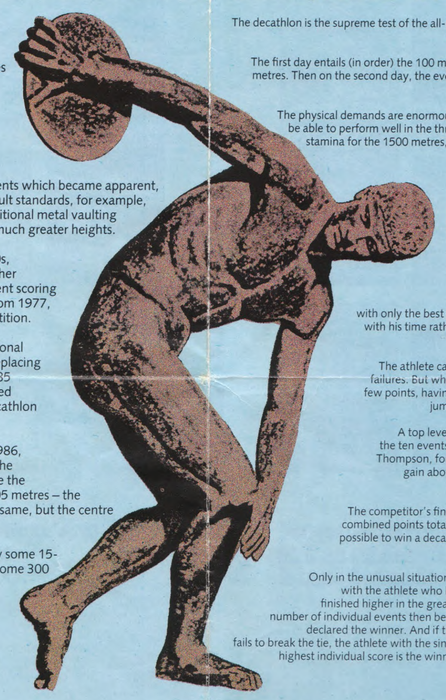
The introduction of rubberised all-weather tracks, also in the 1960s, produced faster and more consistent competition surfaces, and other refinement of equipment, including the expansion of the track event scoring tables to include electrical timing to one-hundredth of a second from 1977, have all played their part in the overall development of the competition.

The most recent decathlon scoring tables adopted by the International Amateur Athletic Federation came into effect on April 1st 1985, replacing the previous tables which had been in use since 1962. The pre-1985 performances listed on this poster have therefore been re-calculated using the current tables, as it is the only realistic comparison of decathlon performances across the years.

But not all developments have led to higher scores. On April 1st 1986, exactly one year after the introduction of the new scoring tables, the specification of the men's javelin was changed universally, because the individual world record had reached dangerous levels of almost 105 metres – the length of a stadium! Now the javelin weight (800gm) remains the same, but the centre of gravity has been altered so that it drops to earth more quickly.

Consequently, distances thrown at top level have been reduced by some 15-20m, and the subsequent effect within a decathlon means losing some 300 points as the javelin scoring tables have not been changed. So although today's decathletes may appear to be scoring less than three years ago, there is a good reason.

Yet the decathlon itself remains the basic struggle between man and his own body which it has been for nearly 80 years, with the same unchanged requirement to generate sufficient warmth and energy, as well as motivation, to produce a series of gruelling physical efforts spread through two long days. In major Games, the decathlon often starts at 9am and does not finish until more than 12 hours later, on two consecutive days. So at the end of such a demanding contest, the winner really can claim to be the best all-round athlete!



RULES AND SCORING

The decathlon is the supreme test of the all-round athlete, requiring the competitor to participate in ten separate and contrasting athletics events within the two days of competition.

The first day entails (in order) the 100 metres sprint, the long jump, the shot putt, the high jump and the 400 metres. Then on the second day, the events are the 110 metres hurdles, the discus throw, the pole vault, the javelin throw and the 1500 metres.

The physical demands are enormous, because the decathlete not only requires the strength and bulk to be able to perform well in the throwing events, but also the explosive speed for the sprint events, the stamina for the 1500 metres, combined with the gymnastic ability for the pole vault. Maintaining all those attributes is the fascinating challenge.

So how is the winner decided? Each of the ten events has its own official scoring table, which awards a points total for every possible performance. For example, an athlete running the 100 metres in 11.00 seconds would earn 861 points. If he ran faster, say 10.50 seconds, that total would rise to 975 points. But if he had only run 11.50 seconds, then it would drop to 753 points. So the quicker he runs, or the further he throws, and the longer or higher he jumps, then the more points he scores.

Each competitor has three throws in the discus, shot and javelin, with only the best distance in each being scored. He runs each track distance just once, with his time rather than position being the key scoring factor. But the high jump and the pole vault are potentially disastrous events.

The athlete can continue jumping at any height until he has had three consecutive failures. But whereas even a very slow track running time will usually score at least a few points, having three failures at the opening height in either the pole vault or high jumps means Zero points, and with it is lost any hope of overall success.

A top level decathlete would aim to score an average of around 850 points for the ten events, but each competitor has his own strengths and weaknesses. Daley Thompson, for example, is particularly good at the long jump and would expect to gain above-average points there. But like most decathletes he finds the 1500 metres very hard, and expects to drop below average in that event.

The competitor's finishing position in each individual event is largely irrelevant. Only the combined points total from all ten events is used to determine the winner. Thus, it is quite possible to win a decathlon without actually placing first in any of the ten separate events, as long as you amass sufficient points.

Only in the unusual situation of an overall scoring tie are individual positions taken into account, with the athlete who has finished higher in the greater number of individual events then being declared the winner. And if that fails to break the tie, the athlete with the single highest individual score is the winner.

THE SIX LEADING CONTENDERS FOR THE 1988 OLYMPIC DECATHLON TITLE

DALEY THOMPSON
Twice Olympic champion from Britain, whose unbeaten string of victories from 1978 was broken in Rome only after injury ruined his 1987 World Championships preparations.

TORSTEN VOSS
25-year-old World Champion from East Germany, who headed the 1987 World ranking lists with a personal best score of 8680 points.

SIEGFRIED 'SIGGI' WENTZ
The World Championships silver medallist and World Student Games champion in 1987, the 28-year-old West German has long threatened Thompson's crown. Personal best: 8762 in 1983.

JURGEN HINGSEN
The 30-year-old former world record holder who has been Thompson's perpetual silver medallist: at the 1984 Olympics, 1985 World championships and 1982/83 European championships. Did not finish in 1987 World Championships. Personal best: 8832 in 1984.

VALTER KULVET
24-year-old rising Soviet prospect, who scored a personal best of 8506 early in 1988 to rank among the best dozen decathletes ever.

SIMON POELMAN
Fast-improving New Zealand record holder, 25 years old, who finished 6th in the World Championships after winning his national title with personal best of 8359 points.

THE ULTIMATE DECATHLON

Best individual performances achieved during a decathlon.

FIRST DAY EVENTS

100m –
10.20 Daley Thompson (GBR) Stuttgart 27 Aug 86 (1032)

Long jump –
8.11m Daley Thompson (GBR) Edmonton 7 Aug 78 (1089)

SHOT –
19.17m Edy Hubacher (SWI) Berne 4 Oct 69 (1048)

High jump –
2.27m Rolf Beilschmidt (GDR) Jena 30 Sep 77 (1061)

400m –
45.68 Bill Toomey (USA) Mexico City 18 Oct 68 (1025)
(First day total – 5255 points)

SECOND DAY EVENTS

110m Hurdles –
13.84 Ivan Babiy (USSR) Sochi 17 May 87 (995)

Discus –
55.00m Razvigor Yankov (BUL) Sofia 5 Jul 80 (975)

Pole vault –
5.63m Thierry Vigneron (FRA) Talence 27 Sep 87 (1109)

Javelin –
75.56m Mikael Olander (SWE) Baton Rouge 4 Jun 87 (974)

1500m –
3:58.7 Robert Baker (USA) Austin 3 Apr 80 (963)
(Second day total: 5016 points)

Total score: 10,271 points

SAMPLE DECATHLON POINTS VALUES:
In each column under the event headings are the various levels of performance required to score the total shown in the left hand column, from 1 to 1200 points.

POINTS	400 METRES	LONG JUMP	SHOT PUTT	HIGH JUMP	400 METRES	110M HURDLES	DISCUS	POLE VAULT	JAVELIN	1500 METRES
1200	9.59	8.54m	21.60m	2.41m	42.37	12.34	65.58m	5.91m	90.10m	3:28.29
1100	9.98	8.16m	20.00m	2.31m	44.23	13.05	60.90m	5.60m	83.68m	3:40.78
1000	10.39	7.76m	18.40m	2.21m	46.17	13.80	56.18m	5.29m	77.20m	3:53.79
900	10.82	7.36m	16.79m	2.11m	48.19	14.59	51.40m	4.97m	70.68m	4:07.42
800	11.27	6.95m	15.16m	2.00m	50.32	15.41	46.60m	4.64m	64.10m	4:21.77
700	11.75	6.51m	13.53m	1.89m	52.58	16.29	41.72m	4.30m	57.46m	4:36.96
600	12.26	6.06m	11.89m	1.77m	54.98	17.23	36.80m	3.94m	50.74m	4:53.20
500	12.81	5.59m	10.24m	1.65m	57.57	18.25	31.78m	3.57m	43.96m	5:10.73
400	13.41	5.09m	8.56m	1.52m	60.40	19.38	26.68m	3.18m	37.06m	5:29.96
300	14.09	4.56m	6.87m	1.38m	63.57	20.65	21.46m	2.76m	30.04m	5:51.57
200	14.87	3.97m	5.15m	1.22m	67.27	22.14	16.08m	2.31m	22.82m	6:61.84
100	15.86	3.28m	3.39m	1.04m	71.96	24.07	10.44m	1.78m	15.34m	6:49.08
1	17.83	2.25m	1.53m	0.77m	81.21	28.09	4.10m	1.03m	7.12m	7:54.11

YEAR AND VENUE	WINNER AND COUNTRY	FIRST DAY: 100m	LONG JUMP	SHOT PUTT	HIGH JUMP	400m	FIRST DAY TOTAL	SECOND DAY: 110m HURDLES	DISCUS THROW	POLE VAULT	JAVELIN THROW	1500m	FINAL TOTAL
1948 (Wembley)	Bob Mathias (USA)	11.2 (765)	6.61m (723)	13.03 (669)	1.86m (679)	51.7 (732)	3568	15.7 (740)	44.00m (746)	3.50m (482)	50.32m (593)	5:11.0 (498)	6627
1952 (Helsinki)	Bob Mathias (USA)	11.08 (843)	6.98m (809)	15.30 (808)	1.90m (714)	50.38 (797)	3971	14.91 (860)	46.89m (806)	4.00m (617)	59.21m (726)	4:51.11 (612)	7592
1956 (Melbourne)	Milt Campbell (USA)	10.8 (852)	7.33m (893)	14.76 (775)	1.89m (705)	48.8 (864)	4089	14.0 (944)	44.98m (766)	3.40m (457)	57.08m (694)	4:50.6 (615)	7565
1960 (Rome)	Rafer Johnson (USA)	10.9 (830)	7.35m (898)	15.82 (840)	1.85m (670)	48.3 (888)	4126	15.3 (785)	48.49m (839)	4.10m (645)	69.76m (886)	4:49.7 (620)	7901
1964 (Tokyo)	Willi Holdorf (Germany)	10.7 (874)	7.00m (814)	14.95 (787)	1.84m (661)	48.2 (893)	4029	15.0 (821)	46.05m (788)	4.20m (673)	57.37m (698)	4:34.3 (717)	7726
1968 (Mexico City)	Bill Toomey (USA)	10.4 (942)	7.87m (1027)	13.75 (713)	1.95m (758)	45.6 (1021)	4461	14.9 (833)	43.68m (740)	4.20m (673)	62.20m (771)	4:57.1 (577)	8055
1972 (Munich)	Nikolai Avilov (USSR)	11.00 (861)	7.68m (980)	14.36 (750)	2.12m (915)	48.45 (887)	4393	14.31 (935)	46.98m (808)	4.55m (775)	61.66m (763)	4:22.8 (793)	8467
1976 (Montreal)	Bruce Jenner (USA)	10.94 (874)	7.22m (866)	15.35 (811)	2.03m (831)	47.51 (933)	4315	14.84 (869)	50.04m (871)	4.80m (849)	68.52m (867)	4:12.61 (863)	8634
1980 (Mexico)	Daley Thompson (UK)	10.62 (947)	8.00m (1061)	15.18 (801)	2.08m (878)	48.01 (909)	4596	14.47 (915)	42.24m (710)	4.70m (819)	64.16m (801)	4:39.9 (681)	8522
1984 (Los Angeles)	Daley Thompson (UK)	10.44 (989)	8.01m (1063)	15.72 (834)	2.03m (831)	46.97 (960)	4677	14.33 (932)	46.56m (799)	5.00m (910)	65.24m (817)	4:35.00 (712)	8847
1988 (Seoul)													

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